The
WOOD DUCK

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HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB
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The Hamilton Naturalists' Club promotes public interest in the study, conservation and appreciation of our natural heritage. Meetings are held monthly from September to May inclusive, and visitors are always welcome. Outdoor field events are scheduled for every month, and a complete listing of the entire season may be obtained from the membership director.

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MINUTES OF MEETING OF MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB held at the Headquarters of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington, Ontario on Monday, December 13, 1982 at 8 p.m.

Our President, Norman Ralston, began the meeting by welcoming the over 100 members and guests who attended. Among the guests were Mr. Zimmerman and a group of students from the Burlington schools.

The greeters for the evening were Evelyn Morris and June Hurd; the Foyer slides of Turkey Point and Long Point were provided by Bill Campbell and Bill Gilmour. These members were thanked for their contributions.

A draw took place for two door prizes of Bird Seed donated by Bogle Farm, Millgrove. The winners were Mary Toplack and Ed Ellis.

Norman announced with pleasure that Marion Shivas, our Sanctuary Director, had been presented with a 'Natural Heritage award' at the November Conference of the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

Further announcements were: 1. Paul Eagles' "Study of Natural Resources of Fletcher Creek Conservation Area" has been published and is available from the Club at a cost of $9. plus postage; 2. The Canadian Government Publishing Service has published "Breeding Birds of Long Point, Lake Erie" at a cost of $11.75; 3. Ontario Basic Mapping Index Maps are available free from Ministry of Natural Resources, Queen's Park. Detailed maps cost $2; and 4. The Environmentalist of the Year Dinner will be held on March 18,1983.

Our speaker for the evening, Tom Beechey, of the Parks Division,Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, was introduced by Bill Crins. Tom has worked for 15 years on the planning of the 'Nature Reserves System' which was his topic for the evening's presentation.

Tom, with the aid of maps, charts and site photographs, gave us a detailed outline of the process of identifying areas which should become Nature Reserves; how they can be protected and managed. Provincial legislation pertaining to Parks was outlined.

The problem of identifying such areas is immense, ranging as it does from the Southern Deciduous (Carolinian) Forest which has an extremely rich and diverse biota, through the Southern Deciduous Evergreen, Northern Evergreen Deciduous, Boreal Forest, Sub-Arctic Forest to the Tundra on the Hudson Bay coast. Areas in the north are especially difficult to identify. Within the various vegetation zones, land forms are identified, for example wetlands, fens, to further the process.

After initial identification has taken place, detailed field work is undertaken. When all criteria for a nature reserve are met, protection can be effected by designating the area as a Nature Reserve by itself, or as a Nature Reserve within another Park designation, for example Wilderness Park.

Tom mentioned the Land Use Strategy drafts presented to the public for comment earlier this year. Within these drafts were areas identified as potential Nature Reserves.

He pointed out the benefit derived from the continuin co-operation with Nature Conservancy, Ontario Heritage Foundation,Conservation Authorities, the F.O.N. and its affiliated Clubs, and the Ministry of Natural Resources in efforts to protect areas of natural significance.

Tom acknowledged the work done by colleagues in his work on the Nature Reserves System; without their help it would not have been possible.

Many interesting questions were raised by members; will the isolation of reserves lead to the destruction of the biota they were set up to protect? the monitoring of reserves after designation? and the question of separate legislation for nature reserves.

THE NEST RECORD CARD PROGRAM

If you get a kick out of watching the birds that nest around your home in the spring, there's a way to indulge your fancy and help the professionals at the same time. It's called the Nest Record Card Program(NRCP).

The idea came from England and started in British Columbia in 1955. By 1969 it was operational throughout the country, thanks to the enthusiasm of regional coordinators and the response of people eager to take a closer look at the domestic life of birds. Professional coordinators have come mainly from museums, universities and the CWS, Observers come from all walks of life across the land.

The NRCP is provided with standard nest record cards by the CWS. On these the observer enters information about the next, such as its position, what it is made of, and its height above ground. The general habitat is described and details about eggs and young are entered. Finally, the success or failure of the breeding attempt is noted. Four to six suitably-timed visits to a nest are normally sufficient to get the data. Care and good judgment during these visits are important, lest the welfare of the nest be jeopardized.

The nest record cards are filed with the regional coordinators, and the information is used mainly in studies of such things as nesting biology and breeding success and distribution. The greater the number of cards available for a species in a given region, the more useful they are for a specific research need. NRCP material has been used in studies of seabird colonies in British Columbia, of nesting data for eastern bluebirds, and of purple martin distribution in New Brunswick.

There is no doubt about the value of this work to the scientist, but it also give the observer enjoyment and a memorable learning experience. One sc scientist with the NRCP has apt words to express it.

.....By encouraging people to look at birds and their nests with care and judgment, we are stimulating public awareness of our natural environment as som something to be treasured.....Man finds it easy to identify with birds, easier than with most other living things: birds communicate with each other by voice, they build complicated homes, some even go to Florida for the winter. Like man birds depend on their environment, but only man can ensure that it survives.

(reprinted from Man and Wildlife in a Shared Environment)

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" BREEDING BIRDS OF LONG POINT, LAKE ERIE"

This new book is available from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Ottawa K1A 0S9 for $11.75.

It is prepared by J.D.Mc Cracken, M.S.W.Bradstreet and G.L. Holroyd, and contains 74 pages with a map,graphics and illustration

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Minutes (continued)

Tom's final message to us was "Be Vigilant" and "Be Watchdogs"

Marion Shivas thanked Tom for his most interesting and informative presentation and for the monumental and excellent work he is doing for the Nature Reserves System.

Norman concluded the meeting by wishing everyone a Happy Christmas season and Good Luck in the New Year. He invited all to stay for hot cider and cookies, which had been provided by members.

Barbara Reid, Secretary

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RARE POISONOUS SNAKES NEED PROTECTION TOO

by David R. Francis, Honey Harbour,Ont.*

Patrick Weatherhead has been inserting tiny radio transmitters under the skin of black rat snakes living in the Rideau Lakes area north of Kingston, Ontario. Michel Villeneuve has been tagging massasuga rattlesnakes on Beausoleil Island in Lake Huron's Georgian Bay. Both measures are intended to aid the survival of increasingly rare species.

But many 'cottagers' in this summer resort area of 'thirty thousand islands' might disagree with those conservation activities. Mr. Villeneuve, a warden in Georgian Bay Islands National Park, reckons that, whenever these shy reptiles are spotted in areas outside the park, most people try to kill them.

"Perhaps 90 percent of the time, the snake is destroyed," he guesses. That saddens him. It partially explains why the massasauga is evidently becoming rarer outside the national park. "People are naturally scared of snakes, especially poisonous ones,"the warden said.

Nevertheless, Canadian wildlife authorities are moving to protect these creatures. The federal-provincial Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada has assigned studies on the status of various species of snakes, especially those endangered to some degree by man. Mr. Villeneuve's work is part of that program.

Dr. Weatherhead's research, on the other hand, is funded by the World Wildlife Fund of Canada. Actually he's an ornithologist. He became interested in the black rat snake because it raids bird nests for the fledglings, as well as swallowing rodents. He has found that the scientific information available about snakes is much more scarce and less sophisticated than that concerning birds.

"We are doing natural history on snakes," he said. "We need to understand the basic biology of the creatures."

Earlier this year, he implanted radio transmitters deep under the skin(to prevent ejection during shedding) of six of the tree-climbing black rat snakes. Apparently it was the first time this has been done in Canada and perhaps anywhere. Since then, with the aid of three students, he has tracked the serpents daily. None has moved more than 1½ miles from where it was caught. Nor are the five to six foot long snakes all that active, though they do move as much as one-third of a mile in a day.

The snakes shed their skin three times each summer, andthey stay put for two weeks while doing so. When a snake sheds, it also sheds the scale over its eyes. So its vision is probably clouded, and it may feel staying hidden is safer.

The black "rat snake, Canada's largest snake, used to be widespread in southern Ontario. Now its habitat is apparently limited to the Rideau Lakes area. Dr. Weatherhead suspects their decline is largely due to people clubbing them. But he hopes to find out this winter where they "overwinter" to see if these sites are bing disturbed, thereby endangering them.

Serpents this far north hibernate in the winter. Some, like garter snakes, gather together by the hundreds or even thousands in hibernaculums, or dens. But no one knows if black rat snakes-or, for that matter, massasauga rattlesnakes -come together in large numbers. At this time in the fall, Dr. Weatherhead reports, his six individual snakes have slowed down with the cooler weather, staying in such places as wood piles or under cottages. He suspects-but won't find out for a few weeks-that they do not get together in a group to hibernate. Such scattering may improve the chance of the species surviving, Dr. Weatherhead figures.

Meanwhile Mr. Villeneuve is carrying out a five year old study of the fairly rare massasauga rattlers in the national park near here. In the past three years,

(continued next page)

Rare Poisonous Snakes Need Protection Too (continued)
he personally has run across only one massasauga on Beausoleil Island. However, many thousands of campers and others visit the island each year. Thus the park wardens are called frequently by someone spotting these protected rattlers- on average about 50 times a year.

The wardens come quickly, pick the rattlers up with a snake hook, on which the vipers tend to balance themselves, and pop them into a garbage can with a lid that fastens tight. Some are carefully tagged through their rattles, which are dead tissue. Thus the procedure is painless. All the snakes are then let free elsewhere on the island with the coloured tags showing the date and place.

The idea is to track their movements and learn, more about these rattlers. Unfortunately, few of these tagged snakes are subsequently caught. New information has thus been sparse. However, one was caught on another island more than a mile from Beausoleil. "All snakes are good swimmers,"said Mr. Villeneuve.

The past summer was somewhat cold, and there were fewer visitors to the national park. Mr. Villeneuve figures these factors may explain why he and his colleagues caught only 23 rattlers by late August.

One of the 23 snakes caught this year seemed especially chubby. When Mr. Villeneuve let it go, he saw it give birth to three eight inch young ones before it slithered out of sight. Few humans have seen a massasauga give birth. In 15 minutes those young rattlers were ready for business, mouths open, fangs showing, and trying to rattle their still-wet rattles. They too, quickly slid away, adding slightly to the island's estimated population of 400 rattlers.

The park officials are trying to educate the public that the two or three foot long rattlers should be spared - that they are not aggressive or even terribly dangerous. The massasauga rattler, Mr. Villeneuve explained, has only short fangs, which would have difficulty penetrating even wool socks.

Actually the rattlers are useful creatures. Their main diet is mice. The snakes have vertical pupils, like cats, that enable them to see relatively well in the dark. Moreover, rattlers are "pit vipers" with two heat-sensing devices between their eyes and noses. These help them pinpoint rodents or other small mammals accurately. Their venom finishes off victims quickly before they are swallowed whole.

Mr. Villeneuve's ambition is to find the winter hibernating place for the cold-blooded rattlers. He suspects that many of them may gather in one hibernaculum. He hopes to obtain funding for implanting tiny radio transmitters in some rattlers. By finding the hibernaculum, if one exists, national park officials could plan further camping developments on the island without further endangering the island's rattlers by possibly destroying a hibernation den. The island is one of the few scattered places in Ontario where the massasauga survives.

One rare massasauga trait is that it gives birth to only some seven to nine young each year, compared to 30 or 40 for this region's more plentiful water snakes. Francis R. Cook, curator of the herpetology section of the Museum of Natural Science in Ottawa says he thinks the rattler is doing "amazingly well" considering the large influx of cottagers into their habitats. He expects some groups of the snake can be protected in national or provincial parks. But he isn't sure they can be protected elsewhere, considering they are poisonous. "Where is the cutoff point?" he asks. "That is the kind of decision that just gets made."

The timber rattlesnake has not been seen in Ontario since 1941 and may be gone already. Ontario also has on its list of endangered snake species the blue racer and the Lake Erie watersnake. Irene Bowman, an official with the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Department, says an educational program is attempting to tell the public of the useful role snakes play in nature, eating rodents and insects. But basically, she thinks, the snakes should be saved"for their own sakes."
*(reprinted from The Christian Science Monitor)

HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB EXECUTIVE 1982 - 1983

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AWARD

The Ontario Heritage Foundation at its first conference in Toronto on November 23, 1982, presented "The Natural Heritage Award" to Marion Shivas. The citation reads:

"Sincere appreciation is extended for the valuable contrbution for the protection of the Natural Heritage in Ontario as a founder of the Natural Reserves Committee of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists".

We congratulate Marion on this award.

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ONTARIO BASIC MAPPING

The Ministry of Natural Resources will supply, without charge, index maps for all areas of Ontario. The maps may be obtained by contacting the Public Service Centre at Queens Park in Toronto, or by telephoning (416) 965-1348.

In Southern Ontario these Basic Maps are scaled at 1:250,000. The map number for the Hamilton area is 03.

Copies of the Explanitory Notes and Symbolization pamphlets may be obtained without charge. Large scale maps 1:10,000 or 1:5000 are available at $2.00 each.

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE NATURE'S WAYS

During the past two decades the word ecology has been more and more firmly implanted in the vocabulary of most people, as scientists every day discover another facet in the complex interactions of the natural systems of the planet. In the same time, the pace and proliferation of modern technoloical society has brought about great changes to our environment and will bring more. Yet, even when the adverse results of man's handiwork are plain to see, we may be frustrated by the difficulties of fulfilling human needs and demands while protecting the source of that fulfillment. Too often short-term economic, political and social considerations prevail.

As our capacity to alter our environment grows, we too often befoul the world in which we live. Consider just one example. To operate our industries, to refine minerals and augment our energy supplies, we pollute the atmosphere with gases that convert life-giving raindrops into sterilizing acids. Today we are observing only the more obvious effects of this phenomenon. Lakes can die; that much is evident. But what about the trees and other vegetation and the wildlife so dependent upon clean water and soil: The potential for wide-ranging environmental catastrophe is frightening.

How much do we wish to gamble in these circumstances? With warning signals flying, do we want to disrupt natural processes to such extremes that our well-being and even survival are imperiled? Often the convenient ways for us to achieve our ends are at odds with nature. Not recognizing this at the outset, we usually learn by trial and error. What we must do is read the preliminary signs quickly and try to act with wisdom.

The obvious immediate responses to the acid rain problem are to control emissions of pollutants and to search for alternative industrial processes. Through applied scientific knowledge, we must devise ways of working in harmony with nature. Beyond that, we must work to overcome the sociological, political and economic problems that so often delay or otherwise jeopardize efforts to apply solutions we already know are sound.

The same shortsightedness that makes it so difficult for us to align our lives more closely to nature's ways in general often hampers well-meaning endeavours such as wildlife preservation as well. Problems of establishing priorities in wildlife management, of satisfying apparently conflicting interests, make the protection of wildlife a complex undertaking.

(reprinted from Man and Wildlife in a Share Environment: an Environment Canada Publication)

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SHELTERING WILDLIFE

Each year New Jersey was spending $6 million to breed and manage some 50 species of birds and animals for hunters. But the state had never spent more than $50,000 a year to preserve its 600 nongame species.

A new checkoff on the state's income tax returns this year invited taxpayers eligible for refunds to set aside $2, $5 or $10 of the refund to protect nongame and endangered wildlife. The Environmental Protection Department hoped to raise $250,000.

"We have taken in about $409,000 to date from about 99,800 people," says Paul D. McLain, deputy director of the Division of Fish,Game and Wildlife. About 4.5 percent of those who got a tax refund donated, he says. The average gift was close to $5.

The agency has tripled its staff of nongame zoologists and opened three regional offices with the money. "This time last year we had two people on the staff," Mr. McLain notes. "Now we have six."

(from The New York Times, Sunday, October 24, 1982)

ON WINGS OF SONG

by Rushmore Kidder *

Birds, like operas, are an acquired taste. Neither, it seems, holds much interest ofr the young. When FM radio and I were kids together, the Saturday afternoons of Verdi and Puccini from the New York Metropolitan would send us into gales of laughter. All those deep-throats and shriekies, carrying on in a garble of unknown languages, cried out for a parody which our boorish young voices easily supplied. "O scaleratto," we would howl, inventing words as we went along. "Pookay swint la grambita-fadoh!"(with a sudden swordthurst on the final sylable). Culture, even in Massachusetts, was pretty delicate in those days.

But even if no one is born cultured, some(to paraphrase the bard)achieve culture and some have culture thrust upon them. The taste for opera came gradually, after my wife and I moved closer to New York. Down the road from our Connecticut home was a grand couple whose fourth-row-centre season tickets to the Met had apparently been in the family since the tuba was invented. I was a graduate student in literature - perhaps they took pity on our poverty and my relative bumpkinhood. In any case they regularly thrust upon us their tickets, pleading exhaustion, ennui, or other obligations.

So it was that, scrambling together such decent clothes and jewelry as we had, we dashed into the city on countless weekday nights, parked as cheaply as possible and sat among the furred and rubied listening to such luminaries as Richard Tucker and Zinka Milanov. So it was that we came to love the ever-fresh and tuneful enactments of the old and archetypal plots.

A love of birds, too, is apparently not innate. At least it wasn't for me, who grew up finding more to chuckle over than to respect in feathery pursuits. My parents, however are inveterate birdlovers, for whom a finch on a feeder or the reedy, bell-cool song of a white-throated sparrow across a Canadian lake were reasons enough to guillotine a conversation into rapt silence. I suppose I borrowed from them, almost unaware, some feeling for species less common than sparrows and crows. Enough, at any rate, that one summer(again in Connecticut) my wife and I innocently offered ourselves as teachers at a local nature center. When we weren't tracking raccoons, or turtles, or three-foot-tall youngsters in four-foot-high grass, we now and again led a bird-watching class. Its one student, however, knew more about birds than both of us. We lost her trust at 5:45 one morning when the towhee we had stalked for fifteen minutes turned out to be a robin. We never did see a towhee nor, after that class, the girl.

In fact, we haven't spent much time with birds since. But one day recently I got to thinking about them again. It was a leathery , overcast day, the kind England is good at producing, and we went for a tramp through the gloriously unkempt meadows of Richmond Park to a pond. On the bank, among a lifelessness of sticks and dead leaves, we stood watching the waterbirds - just stood, as though time had no call on us and life no higher calling. Had we been expert, no doubt we could have charted markings and noted sizes. We would have spotted a speckle here, a wingbar there. We might have come up with twenty different names. But we weren't. So we simply stood and admired.

What was it, I thought later, that made those birds so appealing? They were not great singers: a few quacks were all they had on offer. Nor were they particularly beautiful, all fuzz and tufts like untrimmed hedges. Nor were we awed by their wild power. They were tame things, paddling bright-eyed up to the shore whenever they spied promising figures coming along with bread-crumb-shaped bags.

No, what appealed was something greater. Yeats, who loved birds,groped for a definition of it in his poem "The Wild Swans at Coole."

"Now they drift on the still water - mysterious, beautiful"

(continued next page)

On Wings of Song (continued)

Simple lines, those: nothing you can unbolt with the wrenches of literary criticism and say, "Ah, yes, here is what makes this poem tick. "But somehow they stick in my mind. The poem is artfully enigmatic: clad in its own evasiveness, it successfully resists all the most sophistciated tools. Mysterious and beautiful itself, it raises more questions than it answers about the ephemeral nature of daily life and about man's almost-vain attempts to capture it in literary art.

Which brings me back to opera. It, too, has a mysterious and beautiful quality for me - something which so defies logic that I frankly find myself, in its presence, washing along on my own rivulets of thought past great patches of its drama whithout taking in a thing. Like Yeats's birds, I simply drift. I suppose that's a scandalous thing to say: seasoned opera buffs would doubtless have me subjected to the torments of Faust for admitting to it. But it's not that I am inattentive: I simply find that opera stimulates all sorts of extracurricular thinking. In its presenwe the demands of the get-on-with-it world wither, and a productivity of the imagination displaces the more mundane productivity of accomplished action.

Is that typical of acquired tasts? It may be. These are the days of the ascendency of the rational: and rationality (though some would dispute it) may in fact be more genuinely innate than a wholesale trust in the imagination. Finding the time and the willingness to be still, to cease from taut analysis and open oneself to inspiration, is something one warms to slowly in a sometimes lean and hungry age. It has to be acquired. It is akin to song - or to what Keats called "negative capability," which simply means a conscious recognition that one needn't know all that can be known about wing bars and arias, and that there is a certain value in that ignorance.

So I've come to appreciate birds. They seem to involve us in their lives-even in their ignorance. That day, the pond was their stage. The score they moved and sang to was a natural one. Selflessly, effortlessly, they bore witness to a constantly varied but perfectly controlled design. As individuals we onlookers would soon find ourselves in other theaters. But the pond would continue to collect nameless waterbirds and anonymous watchers, assembled to participate in a kind of rural communion that hardly varied from year to year.

Where are those waterbirds when we're not watching them? Where is the opera when it is unperformed? Where is the aria when the radio is off? I'm not sure those are rational questions. They are probably susceptible only to imagination's mysterious and beautiful drift - if, that is, one has acquired the taste for that sort of thing.

(Reprinted from The Christian Science Monitor - Jan.28/82)

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HAMILTON FALL BIRD COUNT 1982

by Kevin McLaughlin

Area covered: All points within 25 miles centred at Dundurn Castle, Hamilton, Ontario, to include Lake Ontario shoreline from Port Credit to Grimsby, Credit, Oakville and Bronte Creeks, Sheridan Nursery, Bronte Woods, Rattray's Marsh, Mountsberg, Lake Medad, Valens Conservation Area, Millgrove Ponds, Beverly Swamp, Hendrie Valley, Hopkin's Creek, Hopkin's Tract, Waterdown, Ancaster, Sulphur Springs, Dundas Valley, Christie's Dam, Dundas Marsh, Hamilton Bay, King's Forest, Binbrook Conservation Area, Webster's Falls, Taquanyah Conservation Area, sections of the Grand River in Brantford and between Brantford and Cambridge and Guelph.

November 7, 1982: 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Temp. 0 degrees C to 10 degrees C. Winds SW to 50 Km/hr. Mainly sunny. Little frost prior to count. 74 observers in 33 parties. Total Party hours - 182 plus 5 stationary observers at Feeders.

Common Loon 48; Pied-billed Grebe 1; Horned Grebe 9; Red-necked Grebe 4; Great Blue Heron 30; Green-backed Heron 1 (L.F., X.F.); Black-crowned Night Heron 5; Mute Swan 12; Tundra Swan 14, Snow Goose 1; Canada Goose 3710; Wood Duck 16; Green-winged Teal 105; American Black Duck 464; Mallard 2264; Northern Pintail 47; Northern Shoveler 87; Gadwall 272; American Wigeon 329; Canvasback 33; Redhead 216; Ring-necked Duck 163; Greater Scaup 1635; Lesser Scaup 404; Old-squaw 810; Black Scoter 2; White-winged Scoter 82; Common Goldeneye 272; Bufflehead 989; Hooded Merganser 101; Common Merganser 119; Red-breasted Merganser 1502; Ruddy Duck 34; Turkey Vulture 1; Osprey 2 (M.O., A.W., R.F.; South-Peel Group) Northern Harrier 19; Sharp-shinned Hawk 1; Cooper's Hawk 2; Northern Goshawk 4; Red-shouldered Hawk 2; Red-tailed Hawk 109; Rough-legged hawk 4; Golden Eagle 1 (M.L., D.R., M.S.) American Kestrel 38; Ring-necked Pheasant 16; Ruffed Grouse 8; American Coot 284; Black-bellied plover 1; Lesser Golden Plover 1; Semipalmated Plover 1 (B.Cr., D.Su.); Killdeer 415, Greater Yellowlegs 8; Sanderling 3; White-rumped Sandpiper 1; Pectoral Sandpiper 3; Dunlin 380, Common Snipe 30; American Woodcock 10; Bonaparte's Gull 51; Ring-billed Gull 4171; Herring Gull 1131; Great Black-backed Gull 68; Gull sp. 200; Rock Dove 1088; Mourning Dove 226; Eastern Screech-Owl 1; Great Horned Owl 11; Long-eared Owl 3; Northern Saw-whet Owl 4; Belted Kingfisher 13; Red-headed Woodpecker 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker 1 (G.N., L.N.): Yellow-bellied sapsucker 2; Downy Woodpecker 126; Hairy Woodpecker 32, Northern flicker 16; Pileated Woodpecker 3; Eastern Phoebe 4; Horned Lark 80; Blue Jay 376; American Crow 1288; Black-capped Chickadee 1003, Red-breasted Nuthatch 27; White-breasted Nuthatch 80; Brown Creeper 73; Carolina Wren 2: Winter Wren 10; Golden-crowned Kinglet 345, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 19; Blue-gray gnatcatcher 2 (A.W., M.O., R.F.): Eastern Bluebird 132; Swainson's Thrush 1 (T.D.): Hermit Thrush 27; American Robin 590; Gray Catbird 2; Northern Mocking-bird 9; Water Pipit 255, Cedar Waxwing 1236; Northern Shrike 7; European Starling 4080; Solitary Vireo 1; Orange-crowned Warbler 2; Yellow-rumped Warbler 61; Black-throated Green Warbler 1 (R.C., V.E., G.B.); Ovenbird 1 (A.W., R.F., M.O.); Northern Cardinal 186; Rufous-sided Towhee 3; American Tree Sparrow 405; Chipping Sparrow 1; Field Sparrow 3; Vesper Sparrow 1; Savannah Sparrow 1; Fox Sparrow 11, Song Sparrow 144; Swamp Sparrow 36, White-throated Sparrow 200; White-crowned Sparrow 4; Dark-eyed Junco 972; Snow Bunting 150; Red-winged Blackbird 3640; Eastern Meadowlark 28; Rusty Blackbird 91; Common Grackle 226; Brown-headed Cowbird 276; Northern Oriole 1 (G.W., B.H.); Purple Finch 215; House Finch 6; American Goldfinch 645; House Sparrow 1180.

Total: 128 species. About 40,412 individuals

Note: The count follows the classification and nomenclature of the Thirty-fourth Supplement to the A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds (Supplement to The Auk, Vol. 99, No.3, July 1982).

(continued next page)

Hamilton Fall Bird Count 1982 (continued)

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SIGN OF THE TIMES

The following words appear on a sign near the entrance to Blain Castle, Perthshire, Scotland:

Resemble not the slimy snails,
That with their filth record their trails.
Let it be said where you have been
You leave the face of nature clean.

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MONTHLY MEETING — MONTHLY MEETING

time: Monday, January 10, 1983 at 8:00 p.m.
Place: Royal Botanical Gardens Centre Auditorium
680 Plains Road West, Burlington, Ontario
Program: "Soaring Flight and Navigation by Migrating Monarch Butterflies"
Dr. D. Gibo (Erindale Campus, University of Toront)

VISITORS WELCOME — STAY FOR FELLOWSHIP AND REFRESHMENT

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FIELD EVENTS FOR JAN. and FEB. 1983

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 1983, 8:00 A.M. - WINTER BIRD HIKE
Come and see the birds of winter. Meet at Dundurn Castle parking lot. Bring a lunch. LEADER: Bob Curry, 648-6895

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1983, 9:00 A.M. - X-COUNTRY SKI and SNOW SHOE OUTING. An informal gathering at Christie Outdoor Education Centre. Bring sometging for a cookout (e.g. hot dogs). Meet at University Plaza (next to Miracle Mart), Dundas. Leaders: John Heaslip 627-3280,
Shirley Klement 336-5433

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THE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

Protection of Canada's birds and their habitats took a giant step when the Migratory Birds Convention Act was passed in 1917. Since then, both federal and regional governments have continually expanded their efforts to safeguard all of the nation's avian fauna.

To detect and measure year-to-year and long-term changes in bird populations (particularly smaller land birds) in a country the size of Canada sounds like a formidable task for a lot of people - and indeed it is. When one realizes that it is done mainly by sound, the whole thing seems impossible - but it isn't.

For many years, wildlife authorities in the U.S. recorded the drumming of grouse, crowing of pheasants, cooing of doves and "peenting" of woodcock by stopping along roads and counting the sounds for specified intervals. This method of surveying game birds subsequently was tried for all birds. Canadian wildlife authorities began using somg counts in the mid 1950s to census insectivorous birds in the forests of New Brunswick where DDT spraying was done. By 1968 the system - called the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) - was being used across Canada.

The sampling unit for the BBS is the degree-block of latitude and longitude Each block has one survey route except in the Maritimes and southern parts of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, where as many as four routes per block may be used The people who survey these routes, cooperators as the CWS calls them, are recruited by appeals in naturalist organizations' newsletters and by personal contact. Those who want to help but lack experience often can ride with veteran cooperators.

Each survey route has 50 sampling stations(or stops) set at half-mile (0.8 km) intervals along a road. At each stop the cooperator listens for three minutes, exactly, and records all birds heard or seen within a quarter-mile (0.4 km). The survey must be completed one day in June when winds are slight and there is little or no rain, and it must start 30 minutes before sunrise.

Analyses of data from the first 10 years of the BBS show significant changes in populations of certain species in various regions. For example, populations of several species of warblers in the Maritimes were adversely affected by low spring temperatures in two different years. On the other hand, also in the Maritimes, during several years before 1975 there was a substained increase in numbers of some other small insectivorous forest birds,especially the red-eyed vireo, the ovenbird and the redstart. This could have been due to the gradual decline of DDT in the environment since its use in spraying New Brunswick's forests was halted in 1967.

The most impressive sustained increase identified by the BBS is of the red-winged blackbird. Its population is rising across the country except in British Columbia, probably because of an increase of corn and alfalfa fields on which these birds are a major pest.

Sustained declines have been few, though they have happened in the Maritimes for the flicker, the northern junco and the grackle. Causes of those trends are not known for sure, but they may have been due to agricultural land reverting to forest. Lesser declines have been noted for blue jays and cedar waxwings in Central Ontario and Quebec, and warbling vireos,rose-breasted grosbeaks and goldfinches in the prairies. Significant downward trends noted by the BBS help pinpoint areas where research may be necessary for finding ways to protect birds. Canada's BBS is an outstanding example of cooperation between government and private citizens who, incidentally, undertake the field work entirely at their own expense.

(reprinted from Man and Wildlife in a Shared Environment)

HAWKS ALOFT IN THE NIAGARA PENINSULA

Each year in the spring thousands of hawks follow the Niagara Escarpment through the Peninsula as they travel northward to nest and raise their young. Shunning open water, the hawks fly around the eastern end of Lake Erie and then funnel through the Peninsula to circle the western end of Lake Ontario and then continue north.

Experienced "hawk watchers" never tire of watching this annual spectacle from their favorite vantage point. Their reward for many hours spent in the field can be sitings of Red-Tailed, Red-Shouldered,Rough-Legged or Broadwinged Hawks that wheel and soar for miles on motionless outstretched wings. Broad-winged Hawks usually migrate in large flocks that from a distance look like a mass of swirling leaves. As well as these Buteos - large Hawks with broad wings and broad rounded tails - there are also Accipiters, Falcons, Harriers and Vultures to be seen.

Accipters have long tails and short rounded wings. A typical flight pattern will be a short series of quick wing beats followed by a short glide. The most frequently seen examples are the Sharp-Shinned and Cooper's Hawks. The Goshawk is much less frequently seen. Accipiters seldom soar like the Buteos and will most often be observed darting over or through the trees in search of their next meal.

Falcons are the most streamlined members of the Hawk family having long pointed wings and long tails. In flight the wing strokes are rapid indicating that falcons are built for rapid flight, not sustained soaring like the Buteos. The most commonly seen Falcon is the robin-size Kestrel or Sparrow Hawk. An occasional Merlin or Pigeon Hawk may also be sighted. It would be a rarity to observe the Peregrine Falcon or Duck Hawk.

The Harrier or Marsh Hawk is periodically seen migrating through the Peninsula. A regular migrant, the Turkey Vulture, is usually observed soaring with its six foot wings held above the horizontal, rocking and tilting unsteadily as it floats along.

One of the best locations in the Niagara Peninsula to become a "hawk watcher is the Beamer Memorial Park Conservation Area in Grimsby. The exposed eroded cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment provide excellent vantage points for viewing these magnificent birds during migration. On a clear day, migrating hawks are visible for great distances along the face of the Escarpment.

There is no best day to go hawk watching although experienced observers will keep a close eye on weather conditions during April, May and early June anticipating the movement of hawks with improving weather conditions. A pair of binoculars and pocket field guide to identify the migrants would be useful.

For more information or directions to Beamer Memorial Park Conservation Area, contact The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, P.O. Box 460, FONTHILL, Ontario, LOS 1EO, 892-2609. Contact person is Glenn Meyers.

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NOTEWORTHY BIRD RECORDS

F - indicates first record for the migration
L - indicates last record for the migration

Common Loon	Dec. 5	1	La Salle Park	Kevin McLaughlin
	Dec. 8	1	Lake at Burlington	Ron Fleming
Red-necked Grebe	Nov. 21	1	North shore of Bay	Dave & Thelma Powell
H orned Grebe	Nov. 20	1	Lake at Kerman Ave.	Kevin McLaughlin
Dble-cr Cormorant	Dec. 5	1	Woodland Cemetery	Kevin McLaughlin
Great Blue Heron	Nov. 22	4	Christie Cons. Area	Tom & Anne Reid
	Nov. 27	3	over Grimsby	George Meyers
	Dec. 12	2	Dundas Marsh	Bob Finlayson
Mute Swan	Nov. 11	1 imm.	Taquanyah Cons. Area	Bruce Duncan
	Dec. 12	2; 2	Bronte; Clarkson	Kevin McLaughlin
Blue Goose	Dec. 12	2	Kerr St. Oakville	Kevin McLaughlin
Pintail	Dec. 4	5	Windermere Basin	Michael Clark
	Dec. 5	3	Dundas Marsh	Kevin McLaughlin
Green-winged Teal	Nov. 14	75	Dundas Hydro Station	Kevin McLaughlin
	Dec. 4	45	Dundas Marsh	Michael Clark
	Dec. 5	18	Dundas Hydro Station	Kevin McLaughlin
Baldpate	Dec. 1	5	Dundas Marsh	Bob Finlayson
	Dec. 12	5	Bronte Harbour	Kevin McLaughlin
Northern Shoveler	Dec. 4	36	Windermere Basin	Michael Clark
Ring-necked Duck	Dec. 5	1	Woodland Cemetery	Kevin McLaughlin
Canvasback	Dec. 5	20	La Salle Park	Kevin McLaughlin
Greater Scaup	Dec. 12	1000	Lake at Oakville	Don & Joan Gunn
Barrow's Goldeneye	Dec. 1F	1	Spencer Smith Park	Ron Fleming
	Dec. 12	1	Spencer Smith Park	Kevin McLaughlin
Bufflehead	Dec. 4	32	Windermere Basin	Michael Clark
White-winged Scoter	Dec. 4	1	Van Wagner's Beach	Michael Clark
Hooded Merganser	N ov. 14	90	Dundas Marsh	Kevin McLaughlin
Goshawk	Dec. 5	1	St. George	John B. Miles
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Dec. 9	1	Spencer Ck at Marsh	Ron Fleming
Bald Eagle	Dec. 1	1 ad.	H igh Level Bridge	Mark Jennings
Ring-n. Pheasant	Dec. 1	5	Harvest Rd Greensville	Tom & Anne Reid
American Coot	Dec. 6	2	Taquanyah Cons. Area	Bruce Duncan
Killdeer	Dec. 5	4	Valley Inn	Kevin McLaughlin
American Woodcock	Nov. 7	1	West Mountainside	Rick Snider
Common Snipe	Nov. 14	24	Valley Inn	Kevin McLaughlin
	N ov. 20	1	Tollgates Pond	Michael Clark
Greater Yellowlegs	Nov. 25L	1	Dundas Marsh	Bob Finlayson
Lesser Yellowlegs	Nov. 14L	1	University Landing	Kevin McLaughlin
Pectoral Sandpiper	Nov. 14L	1	University Landing	Kevin McLaughlin
Dunlin	Dec. 5L	5	Dundas Marsh	Kevin McLaughlin
Glaucous Gull	Dec. 5F	1	Dundas Marsh	Kevin McLaughlin
	Dec. 12	1	Third Line Oakville	Kevin McLaughlin
Bonaparte's Gull	Nov. 14	9	Van Wagner's Beach	Kevin McLaughlin
Black-l. Kittiwake	Nov. 12L	1 imm.	Gairloch Gdns Oakville	Donald R. Gunn
Mourning Dove	Dec. 12	28	Holyrood Av Oakville	Don & Joan Gunn
Screech Owl	N ov. 20	1	Lamb's Hollow	Dave & Thelma Powell
Snowy Owl	Dec. 12F	1	Cement Pier Clarkson	Kevin McLaughlin
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Nov. 26	1	found in torpid state on Trafalgar Road N. of Hwy. 5; now in cage at	Patricia Smith's in Oakvi
Belted Kingfisher	Nov. 11	1	Hwy. 8 above Dundas	Tom & Anne Reid
Y ellow-shafted Flicker	Nov. 20	1	Dundas Marsh willows	Bob Finlayson
	Nov. 28	1	North Shore Blvd.	Dave & Thelma Powell

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Pileated Woodpecker	Dec. 8	3	Dundas Marsh willows	Bob Finlayson
Red-headed Wdpkr.	Nov. 17	1	York, Ont.	Bruce Duncan
Horned Lark	Nov. 28	30	Sydenham Road	Tom & Anne Reid
Red-br. Nuthatch	Dec. 13	1	Grimsby	Jack McInally
Brown Creeper	Dec. 6	1	Hwy. 8 above Dundas	Tom & Anne Reid
Carolina Wren	Nov. 25	1	Dundas Marsh willows	Bob Finlayson
	Dec. 12	1	Oakville	Don Gunn
Northern	Nov. 11	2	3 mi. SE of Cayuga	Bruce Duncan
Mockingbird	Dec. 12	1	Shoreacres	Kevin McLaughlin
American Robin	Dec. 5	1	North Shore Blvd.	Dave & Thelma Powell
Blue-gray Gnatcher	Dec. 6L	1	Miles Court	John Olmsted
SStarling	Nov. 27	44,000	Skyway Bridge	Michael Clark
Red-winged Blackbird	Dec. 4	1	Dundas Marsh	Michael Clark
Brown-h. Cowbird	Dec. 5	5,000	Hwy. 5, 4 mi. W Hwy. 24	John B. Miles
Hou se Finch	Nov. 13	2	Grimsby	George Meyers
	Nov. 28	10	52 Robinson St. Grimsby	G. Meyers, Peter Thoem
	Dec. 6	4	Tanager Av Burlington	Charlie & Jess Townson
White-crowned Sparrow	Dec. 6	4	Winona	Raymond Hughes
Lapland Longspur	Nov. 20F	3	Oakes Road	Kevin McLaughlin
Snow Bunting	Nov. 20	60	Oakes Road	Kevin McLaughlin
	Dec. 1	500	Dundas Marsh	Bob Finlayson

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BLUEBIRD NEST BOX PROJECT, 1982

By George Coker, Ra y Hughes and Sam Tabone

Location: Winona, Ontario.
Area: approximately one square mile between Niagara Escarpment and No. 8 Highway, Lewis Road and Wentworth County eastern boundary.
Habitat: fruit orchards, vineyards and some residential areas.
Genera l: sixty nest boxes were deployed, mainly on fence posts five feet from ground in vineyards.
Results: eight nesting pairs produced th following results:

Successful young	27
Y oung hatched but killed (racoons)	17
Y oung hatched and died (unknown)	7
Eggs destroyed (unknown)	5
Eggs destroyed (vandals)	5.

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& R$I#NELY O"L

Dr. Donald Gunn tells of an injured, flightless Great Horned Owl, probably a male , that was nursed back to health by Mrs. Pat Smith and is now kept in a large cage outdoors. She fee ds it on mashe d up chicken necks. One evening a large Great Horned Owl appeared on top of the owl cage. It did not leave when Pat approached cautiously and took food left on top the cage. It now appears daily at dusk and takes the profferred food.

Varied Thrush	Dec. 21F	1	1151 Lakeshore Rd. E. Oakville	D. R. Gunn

Please send your bird records before the 10th of the month to George W. North, 857 Eagle Drive, Burlington, Ont., L7T 3A3, or phone 634-5463.

--- THE WOOD DUCK ---

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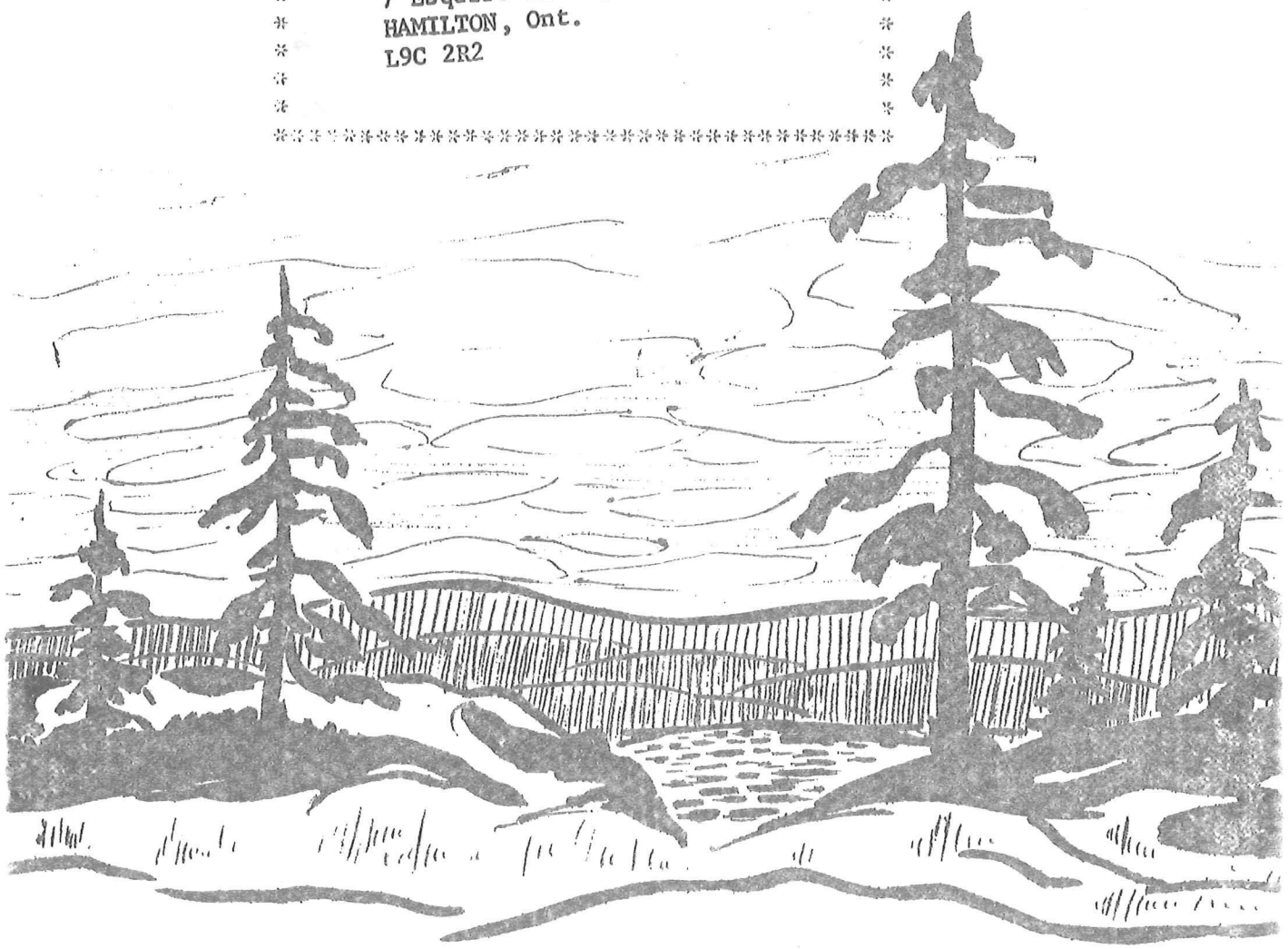

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